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TITLE: POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN  
IRAQ AND KUWAIT

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R  
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Mr Kinchen  
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TO ROUTINE FCO TELEGRAM NUMBER 167 DATED 6 JUNE 1974  
INFO ROUTINE DUBAI, KUWAIT, BAGHDAD, TEHRAN, MUSCAT, JEDDA  
AND CAIRO.

1. IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH AN EDITOR OF AL AHAM, SHAIKH ZAID WAS ASKED ABOUT CERTAIN GULF PROBLEMS AND, ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER AL WIHDA, REPLIED QUOTE THE FACT IS THAT IRAN HAS NOT FORCED ITS PRESENCE IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN. ITS PRESENCE THERE FOLLOWS A REQUEST FROM ITS NEIGHBOURS AND IT HAS RESPONDED TO THE REQUEST. WE BELIEVE THAT AFTER THE END OF THE TASK OF THESE FORCES THEY WILL MOVE ON AND WE SEE NO HOSTILITY FROM IRAN IN THIS MATTER. AS REGARDS THE SITUATION WITH THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA, WE DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THERE IS ANY PROBLEM WITH OUR BROTHERS IN SAUDI ARABIA, MERELY THAT THERE IS A SORT OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN BROTHERS. DISCUSSION BETWEEN BROTHERS IS NECESSARY. AS FOR THE INCIDENT BETWEEN IRAQ AND KUWAIT, A SHORT WHILE AGO SADDAM HUSAIN VISITED US AND CLARIFIED FOR US THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF IRAQ. WHAT HAPPENED WAS ONLY A RASH ACTION ON THE PART OF SOME JUNIOR OFFICERS AND HUSAIN DEMONSTRATED HIS COMPLETE READINESS TO RESOLVE ANY DISPUTE WITH THE BROTHERS IN KUWAIT. UNQUOTE

2. WE NOTE THAT THE REUTERS VERSION ON 3 JUNE OF THE PASSAGE CONCERNING IRAN IN OMAN READS QUOTE THEY HAD BEEN INVITED BY THE MUSCAT GOVERNMENT AFTER IT HAD REQUESTED HELP FROM ITS ARAB NEIGHBOURS. UNQUOTE.

SEE M I F T.

MCCARTHY

FILES

MED.

NONAO.

PUSIS

DEFENCE

MR WEIR.

NBT 3/372/1 (7)

10/16

SECRET



BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

Enter  
②

3/2

8 July 1974

R Kinchen Esq  
Middle East Department  
FCO

PK3/359/1

De Pul

~~Mr. Harris~~  
has seen  
~~Mr. Burton~~  
also.  
Tel me  
one 12/7

#### IRAQ/KUWAIT RELATIONS

1. The Ambassador made his first call on the Minister of Defence and the Interior, Shaikh Sa'ad al Abdullah, on 7 July. Although these initial meetings are normally reserved for the exchange of compliments, Shaikh Sa'ad lost no time in asking Archie Lamb if we could let him have some information on aspects of Iraqi affairs which were obviously bothering him. First, on what was going on in Kurdistan - the extent of the fighting and who appeared to be winning; second, our latest assessment of Iraq's intentions towards the Gulf; and thirdly, did we know anything about Saddam Takriti's recent visit to North Africa (Algeria and Libya) and if his discussions there were of any significance to Kuwait? Shaikh Sa'ad said that he did not want anything in writing but would welcome an oral briefing "next week".

2. It is interesting to have this indication of Kuwait's continued preoccupations with Iraq (when on the face of it everything appears sweetness and light) and it would be useful for the Ambassador's relations with Shaikh Sa'ad if we could respond to the latter's request as fully and frankly as possible. We have enough material here to say something about Iraq's (dishonourable) intentions towards the Gulf in general terms but if you would like us to make any particular points or can let us have an up to the minute assessment, this would, of course, be useful. We can also give him a run down on the Kurdish war but here again our information is not up-to-date and we need a sitrep from you. We also know that Saddam Takriti went to Algeria and Libya but have very little on the substance of his talks there and here again you are better placed than we are for establishing the facts.

3. The Ambassador has asked to see Shaikh Sa'ad on Saturday, 13 July, so we should be grateful for any material by telegram to reach us, ideally, by last thing Friday.

22  
Pete

P R M Hinchcliffe

cc:

Chanceries: Baghdad, Algiers, Tripoli

RT  
16/7

SECRET

IMMEDIATE  
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MBIL 3/354/1

TO IMMEDIATE KUWAIT TELEGRAM NO. 214 OF 11 JULY. 1974

LETTER HINCHCLIFFE/KIRCHEN OF 8 JULY AND YOUR TEL NO 423:  
IRAQ

1. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN OCCASIONAL HEAVY FIGHTING IN KURDISTAN, INITIALLY TO RELIEVE BELEAGUERED IRAQI GARRISONS AND LATTERLY IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP OPEN ROADS BETWEEN MAJOR TOWNS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE IRAQIS HAVE YET UNDERTAKEN A MAJOR OFFENSIVE. THEY HAVE PREVIOUS BITTER EXPERIENCE OF FIGHTING THE KURDS IN DIFFICULT TERRAIN. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHETHER ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER IS WINNING. PROSPECTS FOR AN EARLY SETTLEMENT ARE NOT GOOD. THE KURDS WILL CONTINUE TO BE A THORN IN THE SIDE OF THE BA'ATH WHO DO NOT APPEAR TO BE UNITED ON THE BEST POLICY TO COMBAT THE KURDISH PROBLEM.

2. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON SADDAM HUSSAIN'S DISCUSSIONS IN TRIPOLI, BUT IN A PRESS STATEMENT IN ALGIERS HE DESCRIBED THE GULF AS 'A VITAL PART OF THE ARAB TERRITORY WHICH IS THE OBJECT OF EXTERNAL DESIGNS RELATED TO THE GENERAL IMPERIALIST PLAN IN THE REGION.' THIS SEEMS THE SOLE POINT OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR KUWAIT AND APPEARS TO INDICATE THAT HOSTILITY TO AND SUSPICION OF IRAN REMAIN THE MAJOR ELEMENT IN THE IRAQIS' GULF POLICY. WHILE THE BA'ATH ARE STILL IDEOLOGICALLY OPPOSED TO SHAIKHLI AND OTHER TRADITIONAL REGIMES AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SUBVERSION IN THE GULF, THEIR MAJOR PREOCCUPATIONS NOW SEEM TO BE: (I) THEIR INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND (II) THEIR DESIRE TO BREAK OUT OF THEIR POLITICAL ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF THE ARAB WORLD (WE CONSIDER SADAM HUSSAIN'S TRIP TO NORTH AFRICA, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WAS AT HIS OWN REQUEST, TO BE PART OF THIS POLICY).

3. WE SEE ADVANTAGE IN YOUR TAKING THE ACTION PROPOSED IN YOUR TEL NO 423.

CALLAGHAN

FILES

MED  
NENAD

MR CAMPBELL  
MR WEIR

CONFIDENTIAL

AA  
RY  
2/18

SECRET



BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

2/4

20 August 1974

Middle East Department  
FCO

⑥ 23/8  
Mr. Williams  
Mr. Burton  
enter

NBK 3/359/1

Dear Department

ZAID'S VISIT TO IRAQ, 29 - 31 JULY 1974

NBK 3/359/1 (3)

We were intrigued by the reference in paragraph 4 of Chancery Abu Dhabi's letter of 12 August to you to a gift of arms made by Kuwait to Iraq. Surely the last people that the Kuwaitis would have given any arms (apart from a purely token gift of obsolete weapons) would be to the Iraqis and we would be interested to have any reliable collateral that you or anyone else can produce. On the face of it, it sounds like the kind of canard that SAVAK produces to feed the Shah's suspicions of his Arab neighbours.

Yours ever

PMH

Chancery

cc:

Chanceries: Abu Dhabi  
Baghdad  
Tehran  
Jedda  
Muscat

SECRET

RM  
27/8

CONFIDENTIAL



BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

enter ⑦  
2/9  
Mr. Williams

3/13

27 August 1974

R Kinchen Esq  
Middle East Department  
FCO

NBK 3/359/1-

Has there been  
any progress?

RK 29/8

De Richard

No. The Iraqis have said that  
our draft is with the Ministry of Economy  
and that they hope to conclude an  
agreement as soon as possible.

KUWAIT/IRAQ

When the Ambassador called recently on the Head of the  
Political Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
he was asked by Issa al Hamad about the current state of  
play with regard to the Memorandum of Understanding on  
economic co-operation between the UK and Iraq. You will  
recall from previous correspondence that we were authorised  
to tell the Kuwaitis about the proposed Memorandum and we  
subsequently discovered that a piece of paper that the  
Ambassador left behind outlining the proposal was circulated  
throughout the Ministry for the information of all concerned  
and obviously attracted considerable interest within the  
Ministry. I should be grateful for an up-to-date account  
of the position for passing on to the Kuwaitis.

RSZ

Gavin  
Pete

P R M Hinchcliffe

cc:  
Chancery  
BAGHDAD

Reply sent  
2/9

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



BRITISH EMBASSY  
KUWAIT

GB (ME) 3

2/4

24 August 1974

Middle East Department  
FCO

NBK 3/359/11  
Mr. Harris

com

42

Dear Department

ZAID'S VISIT TO IRAQ, 29-31 JULY 1974

(6)

As a postscript to our letter of 20 August you should know that when the Ambassador saw Shaikh Sa'ad on 21 August an opportunity came up to ask the Minister of Defence whether Kuwait supplied arms to Iraq (Shaikh Sa'ad had just said that no arms went from here to the Kurds). Shaikh Sa'ad replied "not to my knowledge". I think you can take it that the Kuwaitis are, in this instance, not guilty.

Yours ever

*[Signature]*

Chancery

cc:  
Chanceries: Abu Dhabi  
Baghdad  
Tehran  
Jedda  
Muscat

Recd 3/9

*[Signature]*

W. Kinchen to see  
then go.  
R 3/9

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*[Signature]*  
R 3/9



Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1A 2AL

Telephone 01-

9

NRK 3/359/1

P R M Hinchcliffe Esq  
KUWAIT

Your reference

Our reference

Date 4 September 1974

Dear Qatar,

KUWAIT/IRAQ

7

1. You wrote on 27 August to Richard Kinchen to enquire about the current state of play with regard to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding on economic and technical cooperation between the UK and Iraq as this has attracted considerable interest within the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. We have heard little more from Baghdad since our draft for the proposed Memorandum of Understanding was submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 27 July. On 18 August, the Under Secretary in that Ministry, in response to an enquiry, said that the draft was being considered and that it was hoped that they could let us have comments fairly soon. He assured HM Charge d'Affaires that the Iraqi Government were serious in their desire to conclude an agreement as soon as possible.
3. I suggest that you tell the Kuwaitis that we await an Iraqi reply. We will let you know, together with Tehran and Jedda, of further substantive developments.

Yours  
P K Williams

P K Williams  
Middle East Department

cc: Chanceries: BAGHDAD  
TEHRAN  
JEDDA

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AK  
9/9

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AF(MED) 10  
NRK 3/354/1  
BRITISH EMBASSY

BAGHDAD

3/42

18 September 1974

Middle East Department  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
LONDON


Mr B. 23/9  
Ewer

NRK 3/354/1 (628)  
Dear Department NRK 3/354/1 (3)

1. Would you please refer to Chancery, Abu Dhabi's letter 2/6 of 12 August, and Chancery, Kuwait's letters 2/4 of 20 and 24 August, about Sheikh Zaid's visit to Iraq.

2. It is only now that the Defence Attache has returned from leave that we have been able to make enquiries into the suggestion that the UAE and Kuwait have, or will, make arms available to Iraq. Nothing that he has been able to discover suggests that there is any truth at all in this report.

Yours ever

  
Chancery

cc: Chanceries: Abu Dhabi  
Kuwait  
Teheran  
Jedda  
Muscat

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10.  
du  
2/9

cc Research D. 5/11  
Cabinet Office (Assessment  
staff)  
PUSD

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NBK 3/359/11

(11)

Mr. Harkins  
Mr. Butler  
Mr. Cleary  
order

BRITISH EMBASSY  
KUWAIT

29 October 1974

R Kinchen Esq  
Middle East Department  
FCO

Dear Robert,

KUWAIT/IRAQ

1 The Kuwait press on 26 October have short reports on talks held here recently between an Iraqi delegation led by the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Finance and Oil for the Kuwaitis. According to the press reports, talks were about co-operation between the two countries "in the areas of land and sea transport and development of human resources". The main item on the agenda was the use by Iraq of Kuwaiti ports to ease pressure on Basra. According to the Kuwait Times the use of Shuaiba by Iraqi vessels would begin within a week. Al Khaffaf told press reporters following a meeting with the Crown Prince that Kuwait had granted Iraq "all facilities" for the use of her ports.

2 The Kuwait Times also claims that this agreement is an important step towards the settlement of the border demarcation dispute between the two countries. We think that this is putting much too glossy a label on talks which were almost certainly confined to measures of practical co-operation; indeed, Al Khaffaff denied that the question of the border had been touched upon. He had however reportedly delivered a letter from Al Bakr to the Crown Prince which, according to the papers, dealt with improving bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait. We will try to establish from our contacts if there was much of substance in Al Bakr's letter but our impression is that it is unlikely to have gone further than sweet words.

3 The Kuwait Times also reports that one of the other subjects discussed during the talks was possible Iraqi participation in a Gulf-wide shipping company and a bilateral aviation agreement. More about all this will certainly come to light later.

Y 2  
Tel

P R M Hinchcliffe

cc: Chancery, Baghdad

RESTRICTED



3/30

BRITISH EMBASSY  
BAGHDAD

28 October 1974

P H R Wright Esq  
Middle East Department  
F CLO

*Ph 17/11*

*Mr. Clark 7/11*  
*Mr. Butler 6/11*  
*Mr. Hagan 6/11*  
*Mr. [unclear]*

Dear Patricia,

IRAQ-KUWAIT RELATIONS

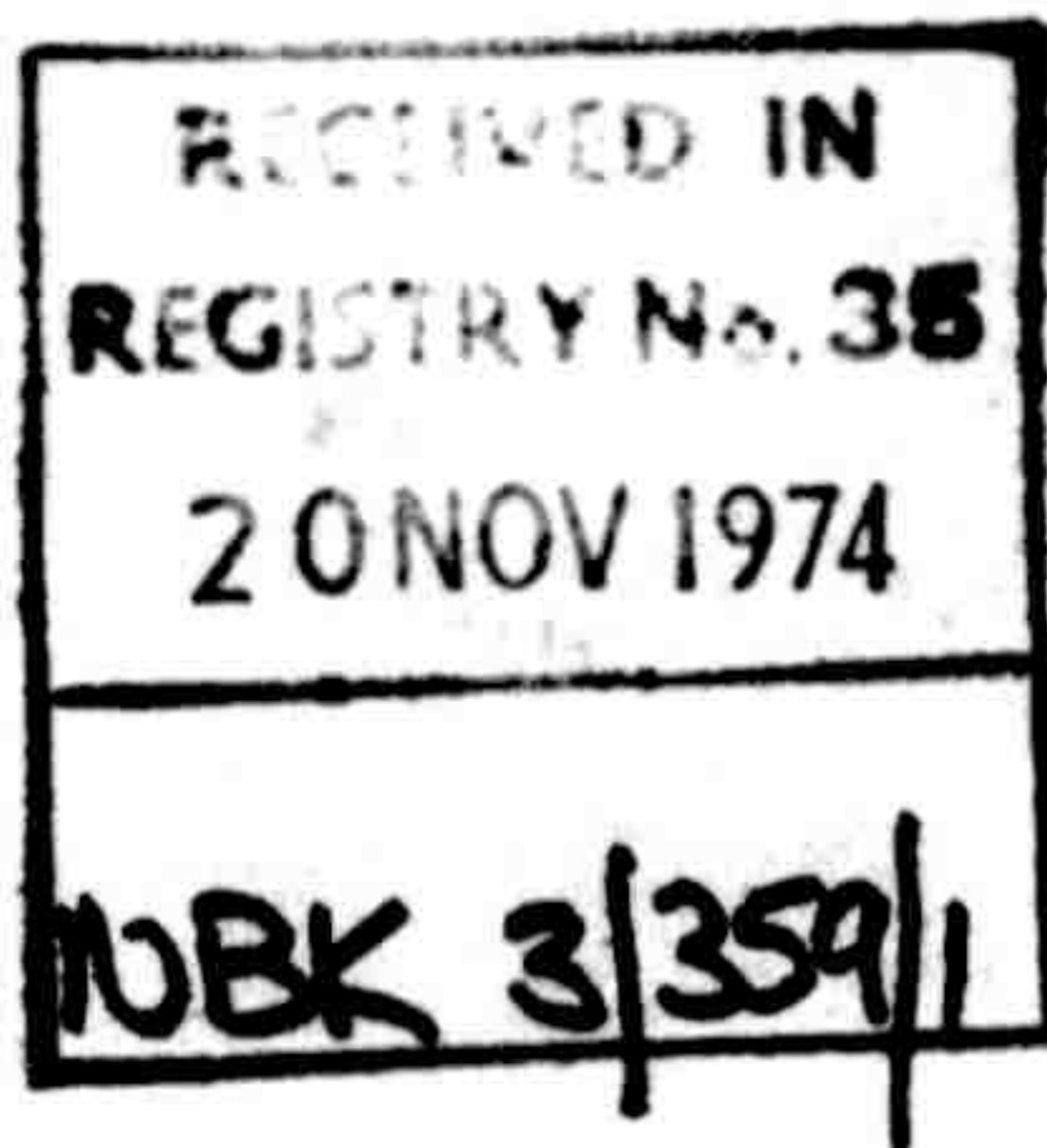
When I called, on 27 October, on Muhammad Sabri al Hadithi, the newly appointed Under-Secretary in the MFA and, until recently, Iraqi Ambassador in Kuwait, the subject of Kuwait naturally came up. He remarked that some of the difficulties between the two countries had been settled and others, he hoped, would be settled. Saddam Husain would be visiting Kuwait but no date had been fixed. I remarked that in the morning papers I had seen a report on a meeting between Saddam Husain and the Amir in Rabat. Muhammad Sabri said that he thought that the meeting had probably been a courtesy one though the question of Saddam's visit could have come up.

*Yours ever*  
*JAG*

J A N Graham

Copy to:  
HE Mr A T Lamb, CMG MBE DFC  
Kuwait

*[Signature]*  
*RK*  
*7/11*



CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH EMBASSY,  
KUWAIT

12 November 1974

⑬ Mr. Harris on 12/11  
Mr. Burton 14/11  
Mr. Raftery 14/11  
Mr. Wright  
enter  
Mr Clark or 16/11  
Copy to Mr. Mod  
Cabinet Office  
(Assessments Staff)

R Kinchen Esq  
Middle East Department  
FCO

Dear Richard,  
KUWAIT/IRAQ

1 I enclose a minute by Peter Hinchcliffe describing his conversation this morning with Shaikh Mubarak, the Prime Minister's son, about the latest trouble with Iraq.

2 The background, which we have been told by KLT, is as follows: about ten days ago a helicopter landed in the Iraqi enclave on Kuwaiti territory at Umm Qasr. According to Kuwaiti military observers, a number of "Russian soldiers" disembarked and surveyed the area before returning to Iraq proper. At much the same time, the Iraqis asked the Kuwaitis for permission to hold an exercise both in the enclave and in adjoining Kuwaiti territory. The Kuwaitis refused (see paragraph 1 of Hinchcliffe's minute). Finally, on the evening of 10 November an Iraqi officer with a private as escort planted an Iraqi flag in Kuwaiti territory near the enclave. Kuwaiti tanks and armoured cars and other units were mobilised (I doubt if the mobilisation was complete, in spite of Mubarak's remarks to Hinchcliffe) and the offending flag was removed.

3 Hinchcliffe's minute discusses the Iraqi motives in some detail. Certainly the only credible explanation is that the Iraqis have decided to put some more pressure on the Kuwaitis to be more flexible in negotiations over the islands of Warba and Bubiyan. The result may simply be to drive Kuwait closer to Saudi Arabia, where the Crown Prince is due to pay an official visit before long. It looks as if we are in for an uneasy winter.

4 Incidentally, we shall be grateful for confirmation from Baghdad that there has been no reference to any incidents with Kuwait in the local media.

yours,  
Richard

R A Kealy

cc: Chancery, Baghdad

P.S. Mubarak hinted as much to Hinchcliffe

CONFIDENTIAL

21/xi

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Kealy

1 When I called on Shaikh Mubarak (who is acting Private Secretary to the acting Foreign Minister), he immediately brought up the subject of the latest Iraqi incursion. He told me that "the family" were extremely indignant about it and especially his father, the Prime Minister, who was at a loss to comprehend why the Iraqis had chosen to be so unfriendly so soon after the Kuwaitis had put their ports at the Iraqis' disposal. According to Shaikh Mubarak they (the Kuwaitis) had advance warning of a large movement of Iraqi troops out of Basra - enough, so he said, to take over the whole of Kuwait. I assume that this is a reference to the Iraqi request to hold manoeuvres as reported by KLT. As soon as the news of an Iraqi presence inside Kuwaiti territory had come, the Prime Minister had an immediate meeting with the military authorities and ordered complete mobilisation of the Kuwait Armed Forces. In the event, it all ended happily.

2 We had a discussion conjecturing on the Iraqi motives. Shaikh Mubarak is convinced that this was a hostile act directed from Baghdad and not a miscalculation on the part of the Basra Garrison Commander. He also dismissed a suggestion by me that it could have been a tactic to divert public attention from the Kurdish war and from Iraq's current internal troubles. He said that this theory would only be valid had there been any publicity in the Iraqi press - as far as he knows, there has been no reference at all either in the newspapers or on the radio. He agreed that it was much more likely that this was a demonstration by the Iraqis of their military might in an attempt to put pressure on Kuwait to be more reasonable (from the Iraqi point of view) with regard to Iraq's claims on sections of Kuwaiti territory which she regards as strategically necessary to protect the sea approaches to Iraq.

3 Shaikh Mubarak spoke in angry terms throughout and it is quite clear that it will take the Kuwaitis some time to forgive this latest Iraqi adventure.

P R M Hinchcliffe

12 November 1974

cc: HMA

Chancery, Baghdad }  
MED, FCO

} to go with Mr Kealy's letter

CONFIDENTIAL

cc Assessment Staff  
C.D. (4) MOD  
sent Rosemary D.

CONFIDENTIAL



(14)

Mr. Burt  
Mr. Harris O.R.  
Mr. Gaff  
3/12  
enter

BRITISH EMBASSY

BAGHDAD

24 November 1974

3/30

R Kinchen Esq  
Middle East Department  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
LONDON

R Kinchen

KUWAIT/IRAQ

1. Would you please refer to Kealy's letter of 12 November reporting a conversation between Shaikh Mubarak and Hinchcliffe about problems on the Iraq/Kuwait frontier. (13)

2. Nothing has been reported locally of the incidents to which Kealy refers. In any event, we believe the Iraqis are likely to be much too pre-occupied with the Kurds and too keen to get imports cleared through Kuwait, to risk seriously upsetting the Kuwaitis at this stage.

3. Iraqi Army Officers, to whom the Defence Attache has spoken recently about border incidents, have said that they were the responsibility of "hot-headed young officers" who had exceeded their authority. We understand that after the last incident, the officer concerned was "severely punished".

4. There are incidentally no Soviet soldiers in Iraq, although there are, of course, officers and technicians.

This was  
something like  
they said before

Jens  
R. Giddens

R G Giddens

cc: Chancery, Kuwait

pa  
OK 12/12

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RECEIVED IN  
REGISTRY No. 35  
16 DEC 1974  
NOK 3/359/1

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*Mr. Lamb asked me about this. I passed on these views.*  
*Mr. Burton to see*

#### IRAQ-KUWAIT FRONTIER

1. When I saw Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad, Kuwait's Foreign Minister, yesterday I asked him for his views about the recent incident on the Iraq-Kuwait frontier.

2. Shaikh Sabah said that Iraq's claim to and encroachment upon Kuwaiti territory was a "cancer" from which Kuwait suffered. The problem was to stop the disease from spreading and he thought that this could best be done by playing down these incidents and not blowing them up as, unfortunately, the Kuwait newspapers had done with the most recent one. He had decided that the Kuwait newspapers needed more guidance and in future he would be having a weekly meeting with the newspaper owners to give them a confidential briefing. Kuwait remained worried about the Iraqi attitudes towards Kuwait and while in one way he could accept that the recent incident was merely the result of an immature initiative by a junior Iraqi officer he was left with the feeling, remembering the system by which Iraq was governed, that the action was the result of orders from the centre. He did not, however, accept that Iraq would take military action against Kuwait: this was now the 20th century and he did not see any likelihood of Iraqi planes and tanks attacking Kuwait. He had, however, no antidote for the cancer or any hope of effecting an absolute cure: Kuwait would have to live with it.

A T Lamb

8 December 1974

Copies to:

✓ MRD, FCO  
Baghdad

CONFIDENTIAL

*ps.*  
*am*  
*17/12*

CONFIDENTIAL

H of C

## IRAQ-KUWAIT FRONTIER

1. Colonel Platts-Martin told me on 15 December that Major Cosgrove had received a report from one of the Kuwait Army Intelligence Officers that the Defence Council had decided at its meeting on Thursday 12 December to send an armoured squadron with bulldozer to the confrontation point on the Iraq-Kuwait frontier to dig a trench, beyond which the Iraqis would be told not to advance.
2. On 16 December the Colonel told me that he had discussed the frontier problem with General Mubarak on 15 December. The General had said that relations between Iraq and Kuwait were actually improving and that he would be sending the troops who had fought in Syria and Egypt to the confrontation area for manoeuvres to acquaint themselves with the terrain.
3. The Colonel's first report may therefore be incorrect or exaggerated or a Defence Council recommendation had been overturned/modified by the Kuwait Cabinet at its meeting on 15 December.



A T Lamb

16 December 1974

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REC'D IN -
REGISTRY No. 35
16 DEC 1974
NOBK 3/359/1

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H of C  
ES

*Mr. Lamb asked me about this. I passed on these views.*  
*Mr. Burton to see*  
 (15)  
*12/12*

# IRAQ-KUWAIT FRONTIER

1. When I saw Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad, Kuwait's Foreign Minister, yesterday I asked him for his views about the recent incident on the Iraq-Kuwait frontier.

2. Shaikh Sabah said that Iraq's claim to and encroachment upon Kuwaiti territory was a "cancer" from which Kuwait suffered. The problem was to stop the disease from spreading and he thought that this could best be done by playing down these incidents and not blowing them up as, unfortunately, the Kuwait newspapers had done with the most recent one. He had decided that the Kuwait newspapers needed more guidance and in future he would be having a weekly meeting with the newspaper owners to give them a confidential briefing. Kuwait remained worried about the Iraqi attitudes towards Kuwait and while in one way he could accept that the recent incident was merely the result of an immature initiative by a junior Iraqi officer he was left with the feeling, remembering the system by which Iraq was governed, that the action was the result of orders from the centre. He did not, however, accept that Iraq would take military action against Kuwait: this was now the 20th century and he did not see any likelihood of Iraqi planes and tanks attacking Kuwait. He had, however, no antidote for the cancer or any hope of effecting an absolute cure: Kuwait would have to live with it.

A T Lamb

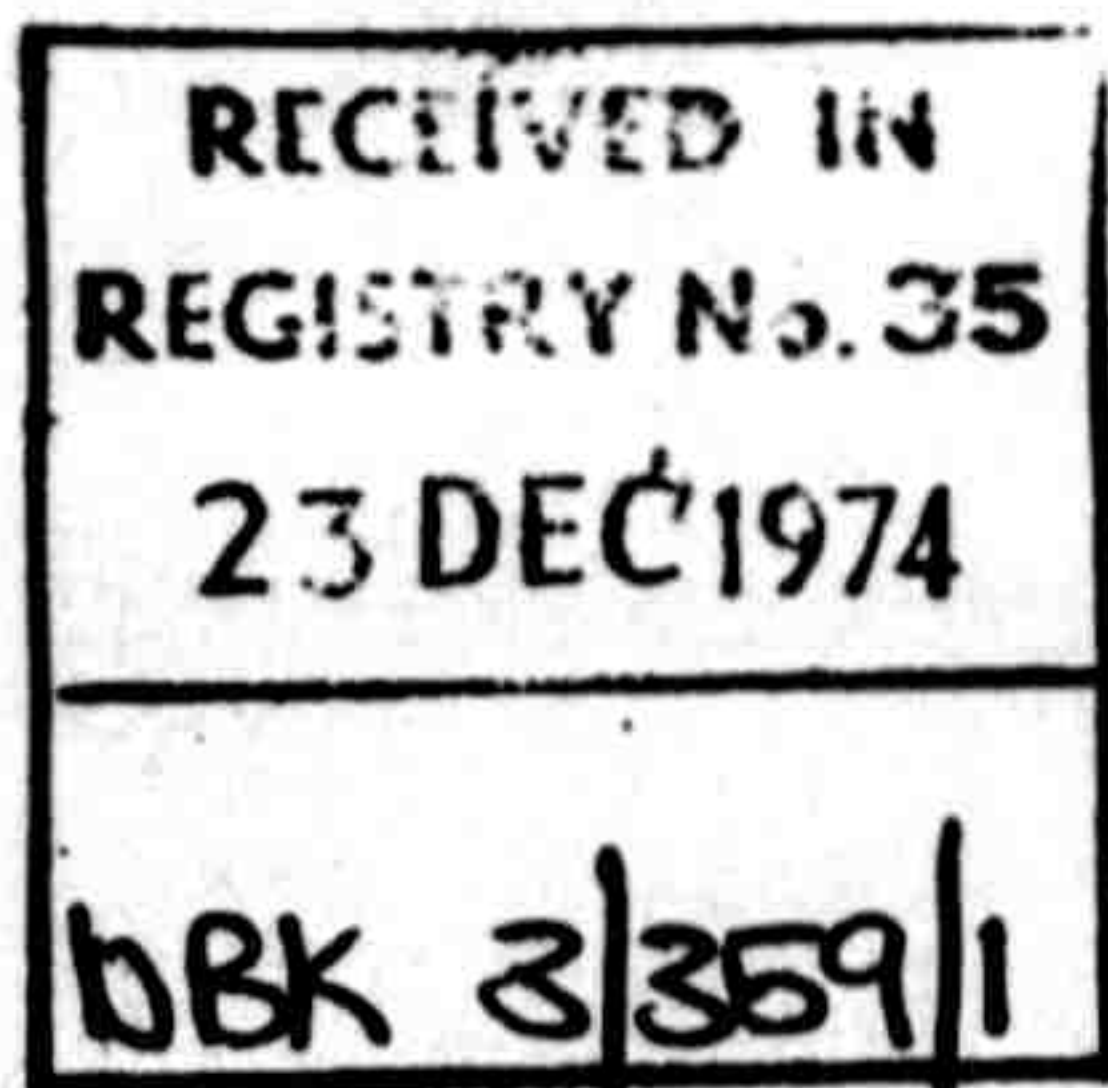
8 December 1974

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✓MRD, FCO  
Baghdad

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*am*  
*12/12*



16

BRITISH EMBASSY  
KUWAIT

17 December 1974

R Kinchen Esq  
Middle East Department  
FCO

*De Rull.*

IRAQ/KUWAIT FRONTIER

1 I enclose a copy of a minute by the Ambassador recording the latest information on the state of play with regard to the frontier with Iraq. I would like to draw your attention to a comprehensive report on the latest position

2 In essence, the position appears to be that temporarily at any rate the doves are in the ascendancy and some of the younger officers, whose hot-headedness has, I suspect, been encouraged by General Salah al Mohammed al Sabah (the Deputy Chief of Staff - LPR 87) have been cooled down. General Mubarak, like most other senior members of the Ruling Family, is obviously anxious to cool it along the frontier but will presumably have to make some sort of gesture, like troop manoeuvres, to satisfy the wilder elements in the Army.

*Le*  
*Ph.*  
P R M Hinchcliffe

cc: Chancery, Baghdad

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17

GRS 140

PRIORITY

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FM KUWAIT 220945Z DEC

CONFIDENTIAL

1974

TO PRIORITY F C O TELNO 667 OF 22 DEC/REPEATED  
FOR INFO PRIORITY BAGHDAD.

RECEIVED IN REGISTRY No. 35 30 DEC 1974 NBK 3/359/1
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16

HINCHCLIFFE'S LETTER OF 17 DECEMBER TO KINCHEN:

IRAQ/KUWAIT FRONTIER.

1. WHEN I CALLED ON MINISTER OF DEFENCE THIS MORNING  
SA'AD BRIEFED ME ON LATEST STATE OF PLAY ON THE FRONTIER.

KUWAITIS WERE NOW DRIVING A ROAD EAST FROM THE UMM QASR BORDER  
POST (WHICH LIES TO THE SOUTH OF THE SAMETA BORDER POST CAPTURED  
BY THE IRAQIS IN MARCH 1973) TO REACH THE SEA AND A NEW  
MILITARY POST SOUTH OF THE IRAQI ENCLAVE. THE PURPOSE WAS TO  
PREVENT ANY FURTHER IRAQI ENCROACHMENT ALONG THE COAST.  
KUWAITI TROOPS WOULD BE MANOEUVRING IN THE DESERT TO THE  
SOUTH.

2. WHEN A MEMBER OF MY CHANCERY CALLED ON CHIEF OF STAFF ON  
21 DECEMBER, MUBARAK SEEMED VERY RELAXED ON THE FRONTIER ISSUE  
AND SAID THAT KUWAIT'S POLICY WAS 'TO PLAY IT COOL'.

LAMB

FILES  
MED  
PUSD  
DEFENCE D  
GIPD  
NEWS D  
PS  
PS/MR ENNALS  
PS/PUS  
MR CAMPBELL  
MR WEIR  
SIR G ARTHUR  
MR THOMSON  
MOD INTERNAL

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TO FLASH FCO TEL NO 666 OF 29 DEC.

KUWAIT - INTERNAL SITUATION.

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER TELEPHONED ME ABOUT AN HOUR AGO. HE SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED NEWS THAT "SOMETHING BAD" WAS HAPPENING IN KUWAIT. IT LOOKED AS THOUGH "FIGHTING MIGHT BE ABOUT TO BREAK OUT". BUT THE IRANIAN EMBASSY TELEX HAD GONE DEAD AND HE COULD NOT GET A REPORT. DID WE KNOW ANYTHING ?

2. I HAVE TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THERE WAS NOTHING ON THE BBC WORLD SERVICE NEWS AT 1800Z AND THAT, AT THAT TIME, HM EMBASSY KUWAIT HAD NOT REPORTED ANYTHING TO YOU (I CHECKED BY SERVICE MESSAGE). IF THERE IS ANYTHING FURTHER WHICH I SHOULD TELL HIM TONIGHT, GRATEFUL FOR A FLASH TELEGRAM.

3. PLEASE PASS FLASH TO KUWAIT IF YOU CONSIDER IT NECESSARY.

PARSONS

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FLASH

ADVANCE COPY

(FCO/WIT)

PS  
TS/M Lomas  
TS/Pus  
M Campbell  
R Weir

HAJ MED  
- N2NM  
- BLD

DIS } MOD  
DOC }  
DIO (Col. Jher)  
N10 Deram SI

NNNN

10  
on  
20/20

FLASH

CYPHER CAT 'A

FM TEHRAN 291900Z DEC

CONFIDENTIAL

TO FLASH FCO TEL NO 708 OF 29 DEC RPTD FOR INFO  
TO FLASH KUWAIT AND IMMEDIATE BAGHDAD.

MY TEL NO 666 ( PLEASE NOW REPEAT TO KUWAIT). <sup>(18)</sup>

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER TELEPHONED ME AGAIN A FEW MINUTES AGO. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOW RECEIVED A FULL REPORT. ACCORDING TO THE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR IRAQI TROOPS CROSSED THE KUWAITI FRONTIER ( HE DID NOT KNOW WHERE) AT 7 PM LOCAL TIME AND ADVANCED TO A DEPTH OF 6 KILOMETRES. THE KUWAITI GOVERNMENT WAS ASSEMBLING FORCES INCLUDING INFANTRY, ARMOUR, ARTILLERY AND COMMANDOS AT RAS-EL-TIN. THEY INTENDED TO RESIST AND WOULD GIVE THE IRAQIS UNTIL 5 AM LOCAL TIME TOMORROW TO WITHDRAW. IF THEY FAILED TO DO SO THE KUWAITIS WOULD ATTACK. THEY HAD ASKED FOR SUPPORT FROM EGYPT AND OTHER ARAB STATES.

2. KHALATBARI SAID THAT THIS NEWS WAS MOST DISTURBING HOWEVER HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE IRAQIS SHOULD ADVANCE AND THEN HALT, IF THEY MEANT SERIOUS BUSINESS. WE AGREED THAT THIS COULD WELL BE A REPETITION OF THE IRAQI ACTION IN EARLY 1973. I UNDERTOOK TO LET KHALATBARI KNOW IF WE HAD ANYTHING FURTHER TO REPORT.

3. IT IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE IRANIANS. KHALATBARI WAS QUITE CALM BUT, IN THE PRESENT STATE OF IRAN/IRAQ RELATIONS, AN IMPULSIVE MOVE BY THE IRANIANS CANNOT BE RULED OUT IF THEY CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS A REALLY SERIOUS THREAT TO KUWAIT'S INTEGRITY.

PARSON'S

FLASH

(FCO/WI+)

(19)

PS  
TS/R Enmas  
TS/Pus  
M Campbell  
R Weir

HA 1 MED  
- NENTD  
- BND

DIS MOD  
DOC  
DIO (Col. J. J. J.)  
N10 Damsi St

4 tel  
M. H. J.

30/12

EWJ

Has see Kuwait  
above  
tele

30/12

30/12

12

OK

30/12

(20)

FLASH

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ADVANCE COPY

(Date)

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PS	PS/IN Ennales
PS to PUS	IN Beirut
	Head of MED

Head of NENAIX (2)  
Head of Energy Dept (2)  
Head of News Dept  
Head of Defence Dept (2)  
Review Clerk

FM KUWAIT 291955Z DEC

CONFIDENTIAL

Sent 30/12  
Copy to Sy Leader Gen  
314 MOD

TO FLASH FCO TEL NO 671 OF 29 DEC AND IMMEDIATE TEHRAN AND BAGHDAD

TEHRAN TEL NO 666 TO YOU IRAQ/KUWAIT

(18)

30/12

WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING NOR HAS OC KUWAIT LIAISON TEAM.  
PLATTS MARTIN IS NOW CHECKING WITH ARMY HQ. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER.

LAMB

31/12

(21)

13 Xerox

FLASH

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(Dgtz)

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Ad MED

Ad NENAD(2)

Ad Energy Dept(2)

Ad Navs Dept

Ad Defence Dept(2)

Resident Coax

CYPHER CAT A

FM KUWAIT 292030Z DEC

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TO FLASH FCO TEL NO 672 OF 29 DEC  
AND FLASH TEHRAN AND IMMEDIATE BAGHDAD

OUR TEL NO 671 IRAQ/KUWAIT - (20)

OC KLT HAS REPORTED THAT ARMY HQ IS "DEAD" AND THAT  
THERE IS NO UNUSUAL ACTIVITY AT THE AIRFIELD.

THE IRANIAN AMBASSADOR MUST HAVE GOT IT ALL WRONG, AND  
IS PASSING ON RUMOURS WITHOUT CHECKING HIS FACTS.

LAMB

2044

3/2

Copy to ~~Sydney Cox~~  
D14 MoJ

AA

30/xii

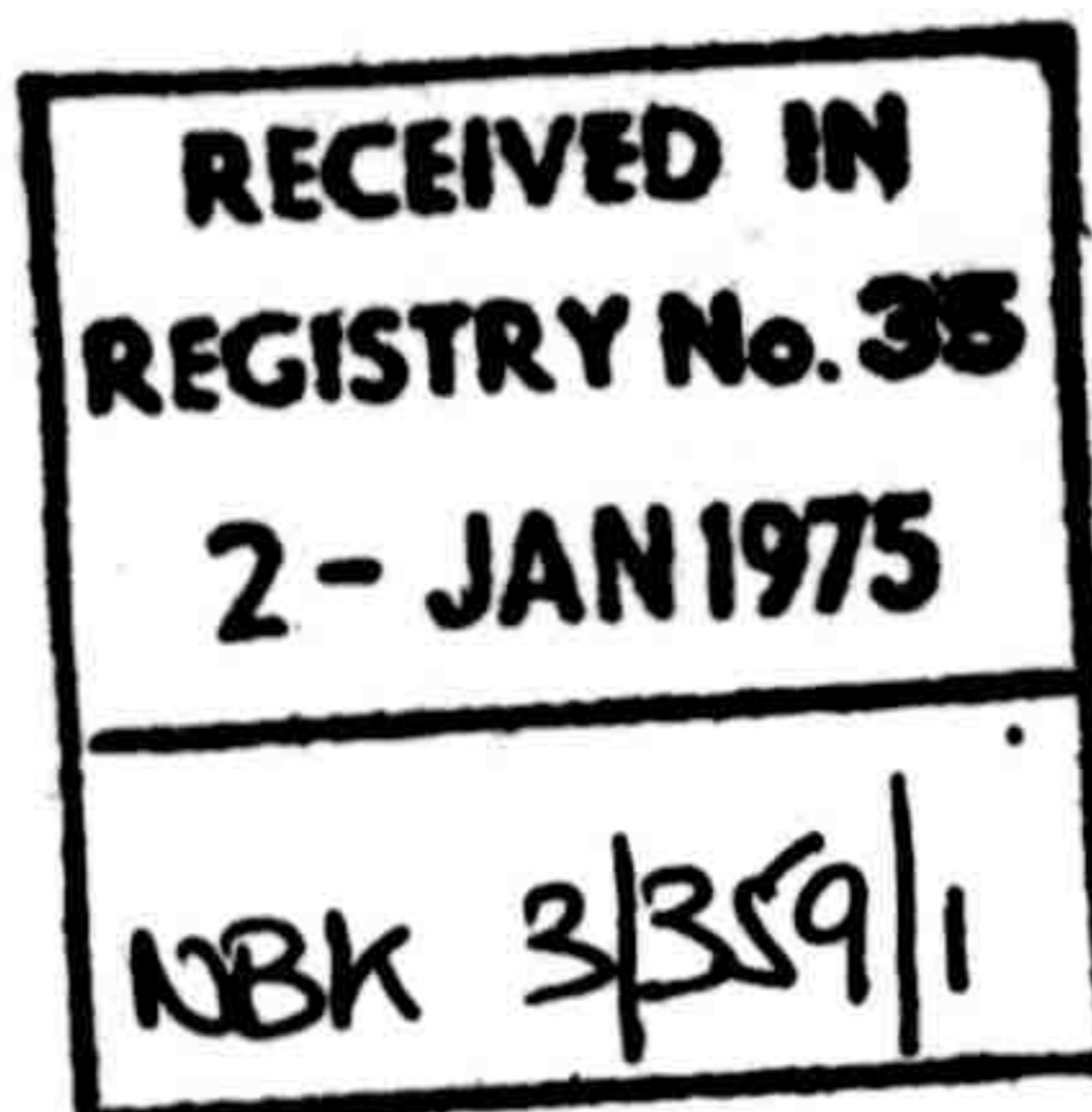
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PRIORITY

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FM TEHRAN 301315Z DEC 1974

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1974

TO PRIORITY FCO TEL NO 709 OF 30 DEC, RPTD FOR INFO  
TO KUWAIT AND BAGHDAD

20 21  
KUWAIT TELS NOS 671 AND 672 : IRAQ/KUWAIT.

1. I GAVE THE GIST OF KUWAIT TELEGRAMS UNDER REFERENCE TO KHALATBARI FIRST THING THIS MORNING. HE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE RELIEF, AND GRATITUDE FOR OUR CO-OPERATION.
2. THIS LOOKS LIKE A CLASSIC PIECE OF SAVAK BUNGLING. SAVAK HAS ALWAYS BEEN PRONE TO GET THE WRONG END OF THE STICK WHERE GULF AFFAIRS ARE CONCERNED AND TO REPORT UNCONFIRMED RUMOURS AS ESTABLISHED FACT. THIS TIME THEY SEEM TO HAVE EXCELLED THEMSELVES. KHALATBARI IS AN EXPERIENCED MAN AND WOULD NOT TELEPHONE ME LATE IN THE EVENING UNLESS HE WAS PRETTY SURE THAT THE REPORTS HE WAS RECEIVING WERE AUTHENTIC. THE EXTENT OF THE DETAIL ABOUT TIMES, NUMBERS OF MILITARY UNITS INVOLVED ETC (MORE THAN WERE REPORTED IN MY TELEGRAM NO 708) CERTAINLY SOUNDED CONVINCING.
3. THIS KIND OF THING IS A NUISANCE BUT, AS SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO REACT QUICKLY - AS WE DID ON THIS OCCASION - TO IRANIAN APPROACHES OF THIS KIND. THE MORE OFTEN WE CAN DEMONSTRATE TO THEM THAT OUR INFORMATION IS BETTER THAN THEIRS, THE MORE THEY ARE LIKELY TO CONSULT US AND TO WAIT FOR OUR VIEWS, AS OPPOSED TO TAKING DECISIONS. ON THE STRENGTH OF INACCURATE INFORMATION FROM THEIR OWN SOURCES.

PARSONS

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30 DEC 1974

NBK 3/359/1

POINTS OF INTEREST IN

THE KUWAIT PRESS OF

1 DECEMBER, 1974.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Kuwait

Ar-Rai al 'Am (front page) says that it wishes to welcome the Egyptian Prime Minister, Dr. Abdul-Aziz Higazi hoping that the ties between Kuwait and Egypt will become stronger. Ar-Rai al 'Am wishes that Dr. Higazi's visit had taken place at a time when Kuwaitis are not feeling concerned over inexplicable events happening on the Kuwaiti borders-through no fault of Kuwait's. It regrets that although Dr. Higazi has come to Kuwait to discuss economic and financial questions, it should raise a question of a different character which concerns not only Kuwait but all sincere Arabs also. The Egyptian Prime Minister must have heard of what is happening on Kuwait's borders with Iraq. The Iraqis have set up military installations at Samita and penetrated into Kuwait to a distance of two kilometers. This situation has created an unacceptable state of anxiety. Kuwait's efforts which have, so far, centred upon the Arab cause, must now be devoted to another cause with the result that Kuwait will have to abandon many of its national duties and concentrate upon ensuring security for herself, especially as it is a sister country which is forcing her to do so. Ar-Rai al 'Am is aware that Kuwait cannot find it in her heart to do so, but she is surprised that such actions have been allowed to continue dashing hopes for Arab solidarity which emerged during the October war. It is surprising that Egypt and Syria which are aware of the sacrifices made by Kuwait in the interests of the Arab battle, have not lifted a finger to maintain Arab solidarity.

Ente

m Kuwait/124

Sho 23/12/74

19  
21/12/74

## Gulf

As-Siyasa (front page) says that the forthcoming Dammam Conference can be taken advantage of to bring into being political groupings in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf. Saudi Arabia is an influential country in the area, and is capable of taking steps to strengthen co-operation among the countries of the region. She is only required to assert her desire for a security belt to be set up in the area, as the future of the area cannot be served through sowing the seeds of dissension in it. Saudi Arabia is called upon to do a lot of things for the area, so that no one may feel that she is taking sides.

Her dispute with South Yemen must not be a problem to which a solution is to be provided by South Yemen alone. It is a problem which needs a Saudi-Yemeni solution. The Dammam Conference must lead to the conferees becoming convinced of the necessity of establishing inter-Gulf co-operation.

## NEWS ITEMS

The Egyptian Prime Minister, Dr. Abdul-Aziz Higazi arrived in Kuwait on 30 November for an official visit to the country. He said, on arrival, that he was carrying a message to the Amir from President Sadat.

Ar-Rai al 'Am (page 1)

The Minister of Finance and Oil, Mr. Abdul-Rahman Atiqi, left for Bahrain on 30 November to attend the meetings of the Ministerial Council of O.A.P.E.C.

Ar-Rai al 'Am (page 3)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Sabah al-Ahmad, said that Kuwait supported Saudi moves in the Gulf area and that she had often called for Saudi Arabia

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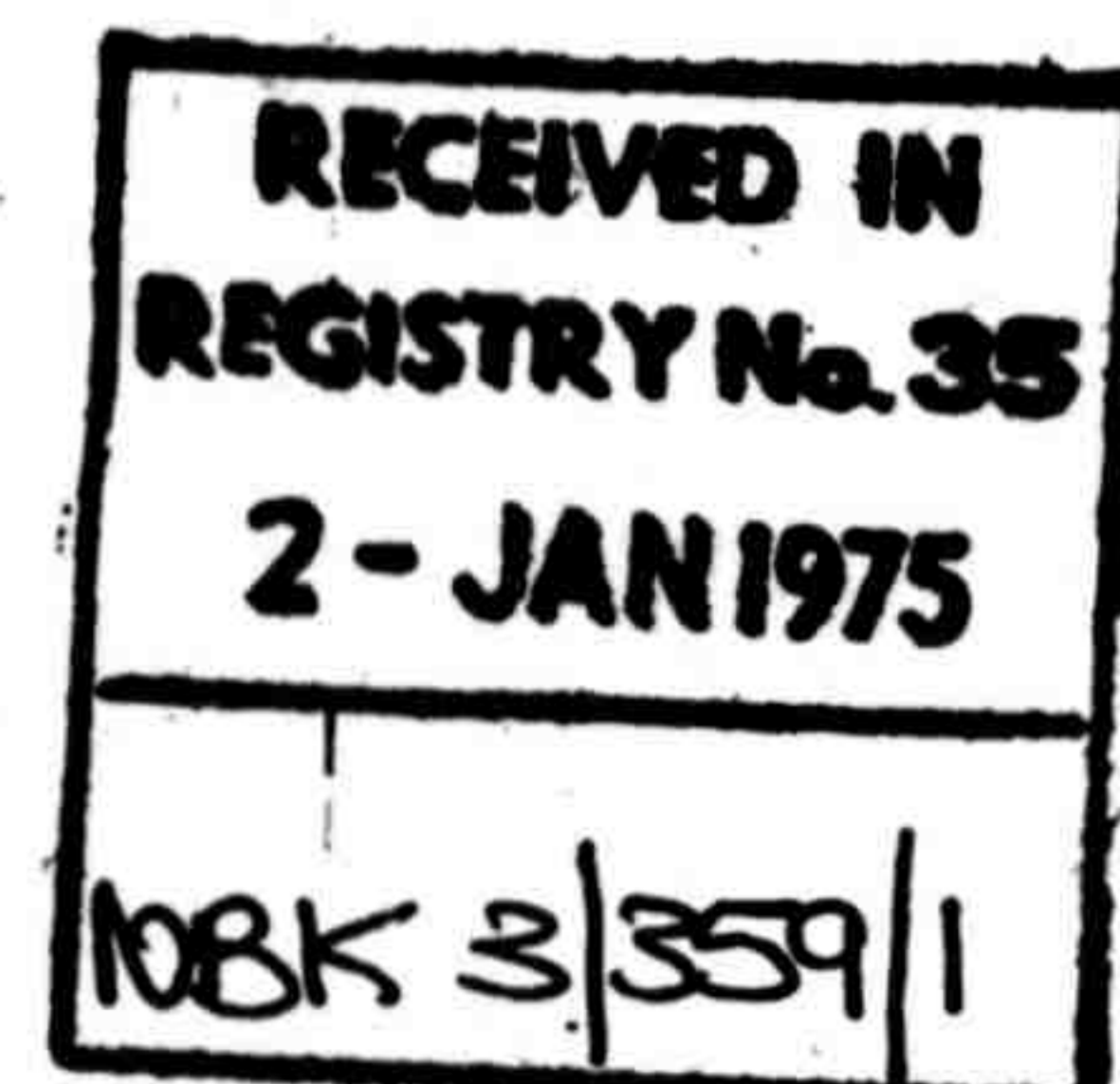
CYPHER CAT A

IMMEDIATE

FM KUWAIT 310930Z DEC

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO TELNO 674 OF 31ST DEC.<sup>74</sup> AND TO  
IMMEDIATE TEHRAN AND PRIORITY BAGHDAD.



21  
MY TEL NO 672: IRAQ/KUWAIT

18  
19  
1. HAVING MADE FURTHER ENQUIRIES OCKLT CONFIRMED TO ME ON 30 DECEMBER  
THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO INCIDENT ON THE BORDER REMOTELY LIKE  
THAT DESCRIBED IN TEHRAN TELS 666 AND 708. A MINOR INCIDENT  
OCCURRED A FEW DAYS AGO WHEN TWO IRAQI OFFICERS  
STOPPED THE KUWAITIS WHO WERE GRADING THE NEW ROAD  
EAST FROM THE UMM QASR BORDER POST TOWARDS THE SEA  
(MY TEL NO 667 - NOT TO TEHRAN) AND TOLD THEM TO RE- ORIENTATE  
THE ROAD FURTHER SOUTH. THE KUWAITIS REFUSED AND HAVE  
CONTINUED TO BUILD THE ROAD UNIMPEDED. THE KUWAITIS HAVE  
NOW DESPATCHED A FORCE TO THE AREA INCLUDING AN ARMoured  
CAR REGIMENT, A COMMANDO BATTALION AND AN AUGMENTED TANK  
REGIMENT WITH 50 CENTURIONS. THE FORCE HAVE ORDERS TO  
STAY BEHIND THE LINE OF THE ROAD AND TO APPREHEND ANY  
IRAQI CROSSING THIS LINE. THEY HAVE ORDERS TO USE  
FORCE IF NECESSARY. THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE INSPECTED  
THE AREA BY HELICOPTER ON THE MORNING OF 30 DECEMBER.  
2. I HAVE BRIEFED MY IRANIAN AND UNITED STATES COLLEAGUES ON  
THE LINES OF THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH, AND WE  
HAVE AGREED TO KEEP IN TOUCH. THE FORMER COMPLAINED  
THAT TEHRAN HAD MISINTERPRETED HIS REPORT, BUT HE AGREED  
THAT HE HAD REPORTED A THREE-KILOMETRE ADVANCE BY IRAQIS  
DURING CHRISTMAS PERIOD.

LAMB

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Iraqi/Kuwaiti Relations With Regard To Frontier. Political Relations Between Kuwait And Iraq. 6 June 1974. MS Middle East Online: Iraq, 1914-1974: Selected files from series AIR, CAB, CO, FCO, FO, PREM, T, WO, The National Archives, Kew, UK FCO 8/2193. The National Archives (Kew, United Kingdom). Archives Unbound, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107498328/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=f9f1c3b3&pg=1](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107498328/GDSC?u=webdemo&sid=bookmark-GDSC&xid=f9f1c3b3&pg=1). Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.